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E.O. 12958: N/A  
TAGS: ECON BEXP MU  
SUBJECT: EMBASSY MUSCAT BFIF PROPOSALS

REF: STATE 126674

¶1. (U) Summary: Post has two significant proposals for Business Facilitation Incentive Fund (BFIF) program funding. First, in an effort to promote the U.S. - Oman Free Trade Agreement and advance small and medium sized enterprises in Oman, Post proposes to bring an NGO specializing in small business development to Muscat as organizers of a training program for a selected group of businesses in the crafts industry. The purpose of the training program would be to enable the group of craftspeople to export their crafts and thereby expand their business. The second proposal is to send Post's Commercial Coordinator, Ida Mathew, for training in Dubai on how to organize trade shows. Both proposals advance BFIF top priorities for Fiscal Year 2010, in that they support trade show preparedness and special programming focused on entrepreneurship and women and small businesses. The proposals are broken down into sections per reftel.

¶2. (U) Developing the Omani Crafts Industry: (a) Brief Justification: Seventy percent of Omani small businesses are operated by women. The majority of these are engaged in the crafts industry. However, many women lack the necessary training to market their products outside of their community, or in some cases even out of their homes. Many of these businesses are thereby confined to the home, where their ability to expand is stifled. Further, many of Omani craftspeople are undersold on "Omani" products that are manufactured in China. Post proposes to bring in either the International Executive Service Corps, TechnoServe, or Aid to Artisans to train selected groups from the Omani crafts sector on marketing, packaging, business development and export requirements. These organizations have successful track records working with a selected business community, particularly in bringing a sector to the point where it is prepared for export. Working with the Omani crafts sector advances Post's Mission Strategic Plan of promoting trade between the U.S. and Oman. (b) Expected Impact: The program will initially train a group of 15 - 30 Omani craftspeople who are selected through an application process. By the end of training those individuals will be able to market their products to a wider audience, including the capacity to export their products. The participants would also be expected to train others on the skills they acquire. (c) Planning Milestones: The proposed project dates would be a two week training program in November 2010. Upon completion of the training program trainees will be expected to follow-up with Post by March 2010. (d) Estimated Costs: The estimated cost of the program is \$15,000. (e) Points of Contact: Economic and Commercial Officer Elizabeth Powers, powersem@state.gov, 968 2464 3623; and Ida Mathew, mathewis@state.gov, 2464 3784.

¶3. (U) Foreign Service National Trade Show Training: (a) Brief Justification: In order to utilize the opportunities generated by the FTA, Post proposes to send its Commercial Coordinator to participate in the Big 5 Trade Show in Dubai from November 21 to ¶24. The Commercial Coordinator, Ms. Mathew, is relatively new to

her position, she has been at Post for less than one year, and would benefit from further training. Observing and assisting with the trade show would enable her to learn how to organize a trade show for U.S. companies, to learn about certified trade events and to enhance Omani participation in international buyer programs. Training Ms. Mathew on linking U.S. and Omani businesses at trade shows advances Post's mission strategic plan by promoting the Free Trade Agreement and ensuring that it is a success. (b) Expected Impact: Based upon Ms. Mathew's opportunity to observe Commercial Services in Dubai plan for the trade show and its participation therein, Post expects to see increased linkages between Omani and U.S. companies at international trade shows. After the show the Commercial Coordinator would be expected to devote more time in developing such potential linkages in anticipation of future trade shows. (c) Planning Milestones: The trade show is scheduled for November 21 through November 24, 2010. Ms. Mathew would travel to Dubai in mid-October to observe preparations for the event and to assist the Commercial Services staff as practical training. Ms. Mathew would then return to Dubai for the show in November. Post would need the funds by late September 2010. (d) Estimated Costs: Post estimates the costs to be \$3,500 broken down as follows: airfare \$680; lodging \$1500; per diem \$600; insurance \$100; and Visas \$100. (e) Points of Contact: Economic and Commercial Officer Elizabeth Powers, phone 968 2464 3623, email [powersem@state.gov](mailto:powersem@state.gov); and Ida Mathew, phone 968 2464 3784, email [mathewis@state.gov](mailto:mathewis@state.gov).

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